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BONN SAYS THERE IS EVIDENCE LIBYA SUPPORTED AIRPORT ATTACKS

BONN, Jan 3, Reuter - West Germany today said there was growing evidence Libya supported guerrilla attacks on airports in Rome and Vienna last week and that the European allies would consider measures against the Arab state.

But government spokesman Norbert Schaefer told a news conference that Bonn would reject U.S. calls for economic sanctions against Tripoli because it considered such measures inappropriate. ||

The federal government has learned that there is evidence support for the terrorist attacks (on the airports) which points to the government of a third country," Schaefer said.

If these firm clues should harden still further, the government will then coordinate joint measures with its European partners," he added.

Schaefer confirmed the third country involved was Libya. He said evidence of Tripoli's backing for the attacks, in which 19 people were killed, had increased in the past few days but that further investigations were needed before joint European action was taken.

Washington has accused Libya of harboring Palestinian guerrilla leader Abu Nidal, the presumed mastermind behind the Vienna and Rome attacks and called on its allies to follow its lead in imposing economic sanctions on Libya.

Schaefer declined to elaborate on what kind of steps the Europeans might take against Libya but said Bonn ruled out economic measures on principle.

The Federal government is of the opinion that economic sanctions are not a suitable instrument, certainly not in this case either," he added.

West German commentators have said Bonn might consider penalizing Tripoli by cutting air services between the two countries and toughening entry regulations for Libyan visitors. ||

Libya is the biggest Arab oil supplier to West Germany with sales of around \$2.4 billion a year and one of the biggest Arab importers of German goods, mostly machinery and trucks. ✓

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